

10 BEST ALLIUMS | HYDRANGEA GUIDE

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**GROW
FOR BEES**
11 PLANTS
THEY LOVE

ATTRACT
**MORE
JAYS**

THE SECRET TO
FEEDING BIRDS
IN THIS BOLD,
CLEVER FAMILY

BLUE JAY

AMERICA'S
no. 1
Bird & Garden
MAGAZINE

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bee favorites



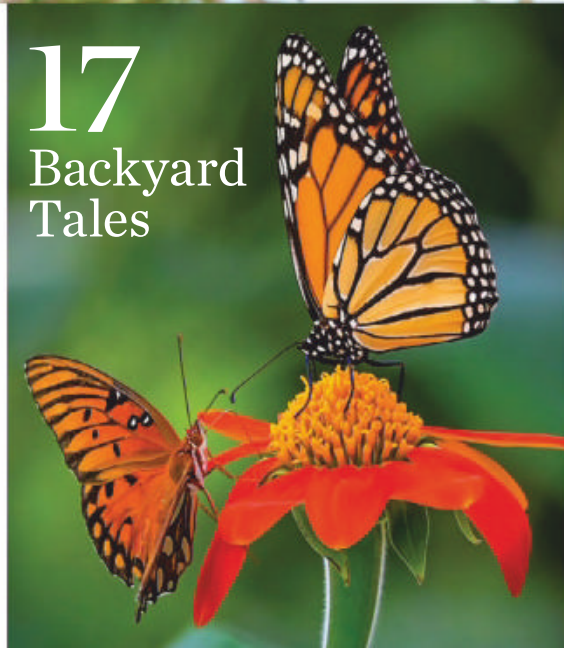
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Photo by Glenn Bartley

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When I was a fledgling

editor at *Birds & Blooms*, I went to the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival in Harlingen, Texas, and saw my first green jay—a large, boldly patterned green, blue and black bird that’s just as noisy and entertaining as the blue jays I see in Wisconsin. It’s been years since that trip to southern Texas, the only place in the U.S. to see green jays. But I’m still dazzled by them,



so I was excited to give these clever birds and their relatives some time to shine in “Blue Jays and Beyond” on page 32.

Also in this issue, we showcase the best summer sights in Backyard Tales on page 17. It’s a special 13-page section featuring reader photos of birds, butterflies and blooms at their finest, plus the stories behind their snapshots. Robin Edwards of Homer, Alaska, shared a photo of a vibrant blue Himalayan poppy—it might be my favorite of the bunch!

And in “Garden Buzz” on page 40, see photos of busy bees in action and learn about the flowers that attract them. Again, all the photos were taken by you, our talented readers, proving that gardening for these essential fliers really does work.

As you can see, we love to put your photos on display and bring your voices into the pages of *Birds & Blooms*. So whether you want to regale us with your own jay tales or simply share your favorite backyard sightings, get in touch at birdsandblooms.com/submit.

Kirsten

KIRSTEN SWEET, DEPUTY EDITOR

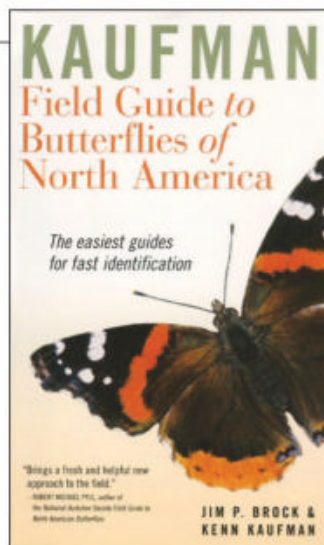
This Month

SERVE SUGAR WATER

Keep hummingbird feeders clean and full to feed migrants on their way south. Just a reminder: Mix 4 parts water to 1 part sugar. Boil, cool and serve!

Read

Get to know more butterflies! The *Kaufman Field Guide to Butterflies of North America* is the best handbook. Keep it close while you’re working in the garden.



Watch

Scan your blooms for surprise guests! Amy Evoniuk of Newburgh, Indiana, spotted an eastern tiger swallowtail on her Pinky Winky hydrangea.

GET AWAY

See green jays, great kiskadees, green kingfishers and more at the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival Nov 6-10. Go to rgvbf.org for festival schedule and details.

CELEBRATE NATIONAL GRANDPARENTS DAY IS SEPT. 8.

Late-Summer Stunner

Bicolored blanket flowers provide fiery, long-lasting color.

Arizona Sun
blanket flower

BIRD BENEFITS

As fall approaches, leave flower stalks and seed heads standing to help the plant become more winter hardy. Bonus: Goldfinches snack on the seeds.

Blanket Flower

Gaillardia spp., Zones 3 to 10

Few plants offer a bright sunburst of color quite like blanket flower. Emerging in late spring, the blooms come in a combination of yellow, orange, red and maroon and stick around until September. It tolerates dry conditions, but does poorly in clay soil. Rabbits usually give it a pass.

Attracts:   

Light needs: Full sun.

Size: 2 to 3 feet tall.

Grown for: An explosion of color and drought tolerance.

Foliage: Long gray-green leaves.

Cultivars to try: Gallo Red's deep red-orange flowers are a dramatic magnet for butterflies. For something a little sunnier, try cheery Mesa Yellow. Arizona Sun also offers classic bicolor.

FEEDER TALK

GRAZING THE GROUND

White-throated sparrows prefer forest habitat but often visit backyards to eat fallen seeds. Yellow spots just in front of the eyes are key field marks that help identify these sparrows.



Ground-Level Buffets

Attract towhees, juncos, sparrows and more by serving food on all available flat surfaces.

BY KEN KEFFER

Many species fly right by feeders, choosing to forage for food on the ground instead.

The easiest way to entice these birds, says Nancy Castillo, one of the co-owners of the Wild Birds Unlimited store in Saratoga Springs, New York, is to “sprinkle small amounts of seed, especially around shrubs, to attract birds that prefer eating on the ground, like towhees, juncos and native sparrows.” Some larger birds, including quails, doves, thrashers and cardinals, also prefer to dig into flat-surface spreads.

Go Easy on the Seeds

Sunflower and safflower seeds, cracked corn and seed blends are all fine for sprinkling directly on the ground. It’s best to serve only a little each day as opposed to piling up a bunch of seeds. This protects seeds from soggy weather and reduces overnight visitors to the feeding area. Nancy recommends a no-mess blend of white millet and sunflower seeds. “That way everything gets eaten,” she says. “This strategy might also attract birds that cannot open seed shells, like wrens, catbirds and warblers.”

Serve near Shelter

Birds known for their skulking nature rarely stray far from cover, so as you landscape, remember your ground-feeding friends. By

providing shelter, you give birds security while they feed. They can quickly retreat to a thicket if an aerial predator like a Cooper’s hawk swoops by. Sprinkling seeds along hedgerows is another safe option. Focusing on the leeward side also protects birds and seeds from the elements.

Elevate the Offerings

It’s possible to coax ground-feeding birds to feeders. “A tray feeder with excellent drainage is another way to cater to these birds,” Nancy says. Seed trays, platforms and shelf feeders bring the seeds off the ground while maintaining the large, flat surface area many birds prefer. Another option is to fill a birdbath with seeds. When coupled with baffles, feeders help to deter raccoons, opossums and other critters looking for a meal.

Cleanup Required

One main benefit of spreading seeds on the ground is that you have the entire yard to work with. You can rotate the serving area throughout the seasons rather than concentrating on one spot. And with all types of bird feeding, it’s very important to maintain cleanliness. Seed hulls can easily be raked up, while feeders should get a good scrubbing regularly. This cuts down on the growth of bacteria and fungi—and keeps unwanted guests away.

THE FEED



SUPER SEED EATERS

The common ground dove is a sparrow-sized species found in the southern tier of states from California to South Carolina. They nest and feed on the ground. It is estimated that a common ground dove consumes over 2,500 seeds in a single day, storing hundreds at a time in a two-lobed pocket near the esophagus called a crop.



My feeder birds enjoy seeds sprinkled on the ground, too. When traffic is heavy, they’ll feed around the post base.

Lori Bowers

CROSSVILLE, TENNESSEE

CLEANUP CREW

Dark-eyed juncos are among the most abundant species, with numbers estimated in the hundreds of millions. In much of their range, they appear in autumn and retreat north as spring arrives—often feeding on fallen seed.

Alliums to Love

Vibrant hues, artsy structure and fragrant flowers—these fantastic bulbs have it all. **BY DEB WILEY**





1 Globemaster

ALLIUM 'GLOBEMASTER',
ZONES 4 TO 8

A hybrid cross between two species, Globemaster is considered one of the best and most beloved of the tall spring-blooming types. Purple spheres covered with hundreds of individual florets grow 8 to 10 inches wide, and look fabulous in a vase. Look for bigger bulbs for larger flowers.

Why we love it: The sturdy 2- to 3-foot stems add vertical interest, and stand up to wind and rain.

2 Ambassador

ALLIUM 'AMBASSADOR',
ZONES 4 TO 8

Many spring-blooming alliums bear similar mug shots, but they all behave differently. Ambassador is one of the tallest, at 3 to 4 feet, with 7-inch, rich purple globes. Plant a few varieties of alliums that bloom in succession for continual blooms. Foliage tips tend to turn brown before the flowers open.

Why we love it: It attracts bees and other pollinators during its long five-week bloom period.



3 Persian shallot

ALLIUM STIPITATUM 'WHITE GIANT', 'MOUNT EVEREST',
ZONES 4 TO 8

For white counterparts that look stunning planted near the tall purple spring-blooming types, check out White Giant, which grows 3 to 4 feet tall with 6- to 8-inch-wide flower clusters, or Mount Everest, with 36-inch-tall stems with 4-inch-wide blooms.

Why we love it: Bright white bloom clusters resemble fluffy snowballs on stems. Use these beauties to add a whimsical twist to arrangements.

ALLIUM ADVICE *Plant bulbous alliums in fall to give them a period of cold dormancy before blooming in spring. Grow them in groupings, spacing as advised by the plant tag, and near other perennials that can take over after the plants die back.*



4 Millenium

ALLIUM 'MILLENNIUM', ZONES 4 TO 8

This midsummer bloomer grows in clumps with a fibrous root system that can be divided. Its rosy purple globes are just 2 inches wide, and its low stature makes it easy to tuck into almost any garden. Shiny green flat leaves look tidy even when the plant isn't in bloom.

Why we love it: This award winner was dubbed 2018 Perennial Plant of the Year by the Perennial Plant Association.

TOP 10



5 Fireworks

ALLIUM SCHUBERTII,
ZONES 4 TO 8

This allium explodes like fireworks with a wispy 9- to 12-inch-wide round, rosy purple bloom cluster composed of 50 to 100 shooting florets. The entire flower head falls off the stem when it dries out, rolling and scattering seeds in the wind like a tumbleweed—the reason it's sometimes called a tumbleweed onion.

Why we love it: Use the dried flower heads and stems in arrangements; you can even spray-paint them for more color!



6 Yellow-flowered garlic

ALLIUM FLAVUM,
ZONES 4 TO 8

It's not a common sight in American gardens, but this delicate allium is an easy plant to grow for late spring and early summer. Fragrant yellow umbels perch on wiry, thin stems above blue-green leaves. Remember where it's planted; until it flowers the slender leaves may resemble grasses.

Why we love it: This bulb will naturalize in locations where it's doing well, creating a patch of lemon yellow flowers.



7 Ivory Queen

ALLIUM KARATAVIENSE 'IVORY QUEEN',
ZONES 4 TO 8

Ivory Queen is a great front-of-the-border allium with thick bluish green leaves that are almost as attractive as the 3-inch white globes above it. If you can't find this cultivar, stick to the straight species, which has pale pink umbels instead of snowy white.

Why we love it: Less stem means more flower power closer to the ground.

BLOOMING ONIONS *Allium* is the Latin word for garlic. Ornamental types, related to culinary onions and garlic, are grown for flower heads called umbels that hold multiple flowers, each on its own thin stalk attached to a central stalk.



8 Star of Persia

ALLIUM CRISTOPHII, ZONES 4 TO 8

This plant's name provides a hint about its origin—the dry soils of ancient Iran. The amethyst-pink florets are larger than those of many other varieties of alliums. It's good for rock gardens, and is an ideal short border plant.

Why we love it: The florets have a silvery sheen, so the 8- to 10-inch-wide spherical flower seems to sparkle.



9 Drumstick

ALLIUM SPHAEROCEPHALON, ZONES 4 TO 8

It's hard to say just how the drumstick allium got its common name— it does not really resemble either a chicken drumstick or the instrument used for drumming. This early summer bloomer may resemble a slender grass until the 1-inch-wide, egg-shaped composite flowers start blooming in midsummer.

Why we love it: The clusters look like hefty and colorful clovers, with bicolor florets that change from green to purple.

EASY GOING

Simple tips for alliums.

- Grow in full sun for bigger blooms, stronger stems and more reliable flowers.
- Plant in well-draining soil to avoid bulb rot.
- After flowering, keep foliage intact to allow the bulb to recharge for next season.



10 Blue globe onion

ALLIUM CAERULEUM, ZONES 4 TO 8

Try to remember where you've planted blue globe onion. Slender leaves clinging to wiry stems may resemble grasses or garden chives until they've fully matured. The 1-inch-wide umbels open to reveal a surprise bouquet of cornflower blue florets.

Why we love it:

That cool blue color! And butterflies love it, too.

Deb Wiley gardens in Des Moines, Iowa, where her favorite ornamental onion is the fireworks allium. She keeps the dried flower heads in arrangements on her porch.

Say Yes to the Mess

Support backyard wildlife with a more laid-back approach to garden cleanup. **BY KELSEY ROSETH**



Leave sunflower heads in place to attract and feed seed eaters like northern cardinals.

Mindsets are changing about annual garden cleanup. Many gardeners work very hard after the growing season to ensure that their beds are pristine come spring, but experts recommend taking a softer approach to regular landscape and garden maintenance.

“Look at your garden through a different lens, and have less focus on complete tidiness. Think about what parts of the garden serve as habitat for wildlife,” says David Ellis, director of communications at the American Horticultural Society.

Raking leaves, tidying beds and picking up debris from your yard could remove chrysalises, egg cases and the leaf litter that helps protect them. When you leave landscapes a bit unkempt, you provide food, shelter and nesting material for wildlife such as birds, bees, butterflies and other insects—and help them survive winter, their harshest season. Plus, when you keep organic matter in gardens or woodland, it decomposes and provides

LEFT AND TOP: STEVE AND DAVE MASLOWSKI; RIGHT: BOR-ZEBRA/ISTOCK



Brush piles give brown thrashers and other birds a spot to forage.

nutrients for the plants growing in your soil.

Let at least one area of your garden serve as a wild space, David advises. Even if it's only a couple square feet, local fauna reap the benefits. Create a small pile of leaves, sticks, stems and rocks for tiny insects seeking shelter. Leave ornamental grasses untouched until early spring. Dead flowers and leftover seed heads feed birds into fall and provide nesting materials for breeding pairs in the following year.

This approach might also help you zero in on your yard. "It reinforces the need for gardeners to take notes," David says. Keep detailed information on your landscape to recognize year-to-year problems and create solutions for future growing seasons. You may notice that certain plants aren't a good fit for your space and should be removed.

Of course, some spots may still call for cleanup. Most vegetables have diseases that carry into

the next growing season, and the dead leaves of some plants, like roses, are susceptible to fungal blight. Stop the spread by removing those types of dead plant material every fall or early winter.

The messy gardening movement is picking up steam nationwide. Some organizations, including The Nature Conservancy and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, have even collected pledges from those who promise to be a little more lazy with their landscaping.

ANNUAL CLEANUP CHECKLIST

☒ KEEP:

Sticks and rock piles
Dead leaves
Flower stalks and seed heads

☒ REMOVE:

Diseased plants
Dead annuals
Vegetable garden debris
Fallen rose leaves



STUFF WE LOVE



Hauling Gear

Rustic and chic, the Trial messenger bag is just the right size to hold a fully equipped camera and one or two extra lenses, plus accessories. It's water-resistant, and the padded insert adds another level of camera security. \$98 at oliday.net



Pro Tips

Award-winning nature photographer Tim Boyer leads readers through everything from setting up a camera to getting close to birds in *Learn the Art of Bird Photography*. \$30 at amazon.com

Picture Perfect

Capture memorable nature moments with fantastic photography gear.



Starter Camera

The D3500 is one of Nikon's lightest, most portable and durable cameras, featuring auto and guide modes to help new photographers transition to their first DSLR. \$499 for camera and lens at nikonusa.com



Strap with Flair

This floral print camera strap is made from comfortable cotton. High-quality vinyl and tough nylon webbing attach to your camera. \$32 at oliveandryedesign.com



Keep it Together

Never lose your lens cap with this helpful owl holder. The decorative end has a peel-off sticky backing that attaches to the cap for easy set up. \$15 at sassystrap.etsy.com

Summer Finale

Savor what's left of the season with colorful birds, spectacular blooms and soaring butterflies.

A detailed photograph of a red-bellied woodpecker perched on a branch of a cherry tree. The bird is facing right, looking up towards a cluster of green cherry fruits. It has a bright red forehead and nape, a yellow face, and a black and white striped back. The branch is covered in green leaves and small, round green cherries. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

I keep my camera in my living room near a window where I can open the screen. I love watching birds feed on our cherry tree. This photo of a red-bellied woodpecker is special to me because of the lighting, and the colors of the bird and its pose as it reaches for a cherry.

Herbert Fields WEST LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

BACKYARD TALES



I traveled to

Tawas Point State Park in Michigan to see masses of monarch butterflies gather before their incredible 3,000-mile journey to Mexico. I especially like how the morning sun highlights each butterfly in this photo.

Cari Povenz

GRANDVILLE, MICHIGAN

Even though I grow many

flower varieties in my garden, sadly, I don't see many butterflies. So I was thrilled when this eastern tiger swallowtail showed up among my daylilies.

Glenda Mueller

ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA



A COLORFUL MEAL

Butterflies are well-known pollinators, and they enjoy yellow, orange, white or purple flowers.

Meet Woody,

a quirky red-headed woodpecker who ruled my backyard. I got such a kick out of photographing this bird! Its favorite spot was this driftwood that I kept filled with nuts.

Darla Young

SHERIDAN, ARKANSAS



NOISE MAKER

Woodpeckers tap and knock on dense tree trunks and other hard surfaces to try to attract a mate. A woodpecker can drum more than 8,000 times in just one day!



My husband and I visited

Mount Lemmon near Tucson, Arizona, last July. High on the mountain, the temperature was cool and quite refreshing. I saw several new-to-me bird species, but the yellow-eyed juncos were especially fun to watch! I love their rusty colors, yellow eyes and the expressive looks they gave me while they munched away on bugs.

Renee Frederick

LOGAN, OHIO

This stunning

male northern cardinal visited my feeder. If you look closely enough, you'll see some crumbs on his bill from the seeds he just ate. I have some health problems, so I don't get out much. I'm thankful for the birds that come to hang out in my yard.

Karen Sons

CROWN POINT, INDIANA



STAYING PUT

Unlike many other birds, northern cardinals don't migrate—they stay in the same place year-round.



It's not often

that I spot an owl in the wild, but on this particular morning, I saw two barred owls calling to each other and displaying. Here's one of them—it was such an amazing sight!

Laura Frazier

KEARNEYSVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA



I took this photo of a painted lady on a tithonia blossom one September a few years ago. That season, there were more painted ladies in the region than I have ever seen in my butterfly-watching time. I'll continue to plant tithonia every year because it seems like a real butterfly magnet.

Anna Applegate OIL CITY, PENNSYLVANIA



Last year the golf course just beyond my back fence was closed for extensive renovations. I went to the 11th green every day for two months to photograph a group of scissor-tailed flycatchers. They got to know me and didn't seem to mind me being there. This is one of my best shots.

Johnny Bliznak
ABILENE, TEXAS

TALL TAILS

To make sharp turns and stay agile, a scissor-tailed flycatcher relies on its elongated tail, which is longer than its body!



Being an avid nature photographer,

I am always on the lookout for special moments like this, when these two American goldfinches went after the seeds in my sunflowers. One of them flew to the flower and then the other one came to check it out. What looks like a peaceful, loving moment was quite the opposite. They were actually fighting for position on the flower, and the brightly colored bird on the right was the eventual winner.

Ray Mueller

BEAVERCREEK, OHIO



Alaska's summers

are magical, especially when the landscapes wake up from winter. My favorite moment is when the Himalayan poppies (*Meconopsis*) begin to bloom again.

Robin Edwards

HOMER, ALASKA

A lot of people

start their day with a cup of coffee. Not me! I begin each day outside watching hummingbirds. There's nothing like the cool morning air and the sound of whirring wings among the stillness and quiet of my rural yard. This particular morning I was lucky enough to capture this sweet ruby-throat guarding her flower from other hummers.

Julie Kirk

OBION, TENNESSEE



Two years ago, the Midwest experienced an irruption of painted ladies. I was seeing dozens of them nearly every day in late summer. I was surprised to find a few looking for nectar from white snakeroot, a plant I haven't seen many other pollinators visit.

Travis Bonovsky

BROOKLYN CENTER, MINNESOTA





My daylilies

are beautiful—I love photographing them with my trusty Sony camera. Near the middle of August when the last of the flowers were in bloom, I went out to take a few photos. I was surprised to find this insect on one of the blossoms. I didn't know what it was, so I put this photo on Facebook, and a wildlife photographer friend told me it was a fork-tailed katydid, which is rare in my area.

Katherine Plessner

VERONA, NORTH DAKOTA

My mother

loved hummingbirds, so I started photographing them for her. After watching them, I have come to enjoy their antics, too! I noticed this female ruby-throated hummingbird darting among my flowers, so I quickly grabbed my camera and followed her around the yard. She was nose deep in the daylily, and I was waiting for her to come out. To my surprise she turned around and took a seat in the daylily! I was lucky enough to get a few shots of her before she took off again.

Vickie Tuskan

EVELETH, MINNESOTA





Two summers ago, I challenged myself to photograph all of the butterflies and moths in my yard. On the last day of summer, I spotted a new one for my collection—this pearl crescent. I love this shot because I captured the pollen sprinkled on the coneflower and the fine details of the butterfly’s antennae.

Bev Danis BALLWIN, MISSOURI



I love how purple coneflowers are in bloom for several weeks. I caught a bee pollinating one of the flowers. Without pollinating bees, we would not see the reproduction of such beautiful blooms!

Dayna Serna
LAYTON, UTAH



TREAD LIGHTLY
Watch where you step when there are bees around—most species nest on the ground.



FLOCK TOGETHER

Groups of goldfinches occasionally include other small birds, too, like pine siskins and redpolls.



American goldfinches regularly passed through my parents' front yard in Katonah, New York, during spring migration. My folks and their neighbors put out food that left their favorite ornamental tree weighed down with chirping yellow birds and the feeders themselves the scene of territorial feuds resembling bar brawls. Dad, Mom and I had been backyard bird-watching together since I was a boy, but when this photo was taken, digital photography was fairly new.

Charlie Banks MOUNT KISCO, NEW YORK



I grow Mexican sunflowers

and spend hours watching the butterflies that visit. I captured this monarch sharing a bloom with a Gulf fritillary. Believe it or not, there was a third butterfly, a skipper, but it flew off before I could get a photo.

Gabrielle Harrison FLORAL CITY, FLORIDA



One of my favorite flowers

is the reblooming bearded iris. I grow an array of colors, but this variety is one of the best! In my garden, they bloom again in fall.

Rebecca Granger BANCROFT, MICHIGAN

It rained the day I hung up this new bird feeder. I hadn't seen many birds because of the rain, but later found this cardinal—a bit wet and taking shelter under the eave of my feeder. I love the color and his beautiful profile.

Stephanie Schick
HOUSTON, TEXAS



I used a Nikon D5200 camera to capture this photo of a dahlia at White House Fruit Farm in Canfield, Ohio. I took so many photos of different flowers that day, but this one is my favorite. There's so much depth to the flower even though it is not fully bloomed.

Noel Mangino
PULASKI, PENNSYLVANIA



Hummingbirds are creatures of habit and they make their rounds from flower to flower. Once I've figured out their pattern, I begin timing and listening for them, which allows me to get prepared and set for each round. Typically, I start photographing them when they reach 15-minute routine intervals. I use my Canon with a 400mm prime lens at a 10-foot focal length.

Mike Bond SUMTER, SOUTH CAROLINA •

BRAINY BIRDS

A hummingbird's brain makes up around 4% of its body weight. It remembers every flower it visits!



HOUSE SPARROW

This sociable bird was introduced from Europe to New York in 1852. It's common throughout most of North America, although its numbers have declined both here and abroad. The male has a gray and rusty crown with pale cheeks and a black bib. It nests in man-made cavities, including streetlights and gas station roofs.



EUROPEAN STARLING

Starlings, which are from Europe and Asia, were released into New York City in 1890, and are among North America's most numerous birds. They're glossy greenish-black in winter with white feather tips that wear away by summer. Starlings fly in large flocks and create amazing whirling balls in the sky.

Nonnatives to Know

Common species that are now abundant in America. **BY SHERYL DEVORE**



MUTE SWAN

This swan was brought from Europe in the 1800s to decorate ponds. It spread mostly in the Northeast, mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes regions. Tell it apart from native tundra and trumpeter swans by its orange bill with a black knob.



ROCK PIGEON

Introduced from Europe in the 1600s, rock pigeons saved lives carrying messages for the U.S. Army in both world wars. Many are gray with two black wing bars and shiny green or red on the neck. Pigeons nest in buildings, in barns and under bridges. They feed young with milk developed in their throat pouches.

NONNATIVES TAKING OVER? *Put your feeders away or fill them with safflower seeds until they move on.*

NEW Rechargeable Digital Hearing Aid Technology Only \$229!*

(*Each when you buy a pair)

The new more powerful HearClear™ HCR3 rechargeable hearing aid combines advanced technology with a low price to provide you with outstanding value.

5 Star Reviews! ★★★★★

Outstanding Product! "This product is outstanding. Dad loves it, my mom loves it, and I am grateful! Don't believe that you have to spend a lot of money to get a quality hearing aid"
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HCR3 Features!

- ✓ Digital sound processing chip provides **clear sound and makes speech easier to understand** with less feedback than old analog technology
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Your brain is designed to use both ears working together. In fact, studies show that you may be able to **hear up to 3 times better** in noisy situations when using two hearing aids. Buy a pair for the best results and maximum savings!



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**Simple.
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Your new HearClear HCR3 hearing aids work at a fraction of the cost of name-brand hearing aids, and you won't have to keep changing the batteries! You will love the discreet, comfortable, lightweight Open-fit design. The HCR3 is pre-programmed for most moderate to significant hearing losses, so you won't need professional appointments to make costly adjustments. **It is shipped directly to you and will help you hear better right out of the box!**

You can spend thousands for an expensive hearing aid, or you can spend just \$249 for a hearing aid that is great for most hearing losses (**only \$229 each when you buy a pair – hear up to 3 times better than wearing just one**). We are so sure you will love your hearing aids that we offer a **100% Money Back Guarantee - Risk Free** if you are not satisfied for any reason.

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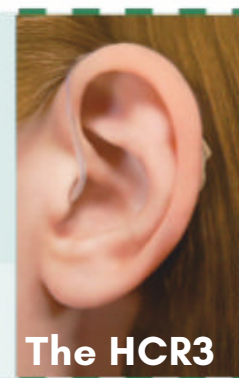
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BLUE JAYS



BLUE JAYS, among the most familiar fliers in the Corvid family, live year-round in the eastern U.S. and parts of southern Canada.

AND BEYOND

MEET THE BOLD, SASSY BIRDS
THAT LIVEN UP THE FEEDER SCENE
ACROSS AMERICA. **BY SALLY ROTH**



STELLER'S JAYS,
like blue jays and some
others, occasionally stir
things up by imitating
the voices of hawks.



WESTERN SCRUB-JAYS

were split into two species—Woodhouse’s and California—in 2016. This striking bird is a California scrub-jay.



**FLORIDA
SCRUB-JAYS**
are the only birds
that live exclusively
in Florida.

CLEVER AND BRAZEN,

jays belong to the brainy Corvid family. Each species has its own personality and habits, and all except the Canada jay are gardeners: They cache seeds and nuts by shoving them into the soil to retrieve later. Uneaten caches sprout into new oaks, walnuts, pines and other trees to keep forests renewed...or to tickle us with an unexpected cluster of sunflower seedlings.

Nearly all jays are blue, and most are about the size of a robin. But here's a surprise for those who only know blue jays—most species lack a crest. Only blue and Steller's jays sport a pointy tuft of head feathers; the others look more like overgrown bluebirds. They're all year-round birds, so stock that feeder, fill the birdbath and get ready to be entertained by their antics!

BLUE JAY

When a jay screams to signal danger, other birds instantly flee, which can save their lives. Everything about these big, boisterous birds says, "Notice me!" Unless they don't want to be seen, that is. Like all jays, even loudmouth blue jays are super sneaky around the nest. Blue jays are the only migratory jays in North America, but you'll still see them year-round; not all migrate, and others move in when migrants leave. Common across the eastern two-thirds of the continent, they're expanding westward.

STELLER'S JAY

These dark, elegant, long-crested jays are named for Georg Steller, naturalist on the 1741 expedition of Captain Bering, not for their stellar looks (notice the spellings). Their range takes over where the blue jay's leaves off, from the Rockies to the

A photograph of a Mexican Jay perched on a pine branch. The bird has a bright blue head and back, with a white underbelly. It is facing right, looking towards the camera. The background is a soft-focus view of a pine tree with green needles and brown branches.

MEXICAN JAYS reside in groups year-round in mountain areas near the border.

ONE MENU FOR MOST

Sunflower seeds, whole corn kernels and peanuts, in or out of the shell, in a tray feeder invite all but Canada jays. Add a block of suet, which every species eats. Then have fun experimenting with these omnivores! Try dog kibble, peanut butter or food scraps to see what your jays like best.

Pacific. Birds of the interior have white face markings; coastal birds, blue face streaks. Common at feeders and in coniferous forests, Steller's jays frequent campgrounds and state and national parks, tempting visitors to ignore the "do not feed wildlife" signs.

WESTERN SCRUB-JAY

Now split into two nearly look-alike species, the California scrub-jay of coastal regions and Woodhouse's scrub-jay of the interior, these bold blue-and-gray jays are common across lower elevations of the West, where they frequent shrubby areas and backyards. Both make scolding cries and sing sweet, quiet, musical songs when with their mate, as most jay species do. A close relative, the island scrub-jay, lives only on California's Santa Cruz Island.

FLORIDA SCRUB-JAY

Housing development has been tough on this federally recognized endangered species as its homelands of scrub oak slowly disappear or are carved into ever smaller pieces. Acorns are Florida scrub-jays' main food—a single bird may cache 6,000 or more each year. Feeders stocked with peanuts help sustain them.

GREEN JAY

A highlight of the birding hot spot of Brownsville, Texas, this tropical jay is expanding its range, with sightings all the way to Laredo, Corpus Christi and even San Antonio, almost 300 miles north. Look for green jays at feeders at state parks and refuges, where they enjoy oranges and grape jelly, but also peanuts, sunflower seeds and corn. Water is a big attraction, too.

GREEN JAYS

are the most colorful Corvids. Spotting one requires a trip to the southernmost part of Texas.



CANADA JAYS

rarely stray from home base, northern evergreen forests, but they do follow hikers or stop by picnic or campsites, begging for leftover food.





PINYON JAYS

stuff their esophagi with up to 40 pinyon pine seeds, stashing them away to eat later.

MEXICAN JAY

At first, all crestless blue-colored jays look similar. This species is known for its bicolor markings—blue above and gray below—and nasal *wink?* calls. Found in the mountains of Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, Mexican jays stay in groups even at nesting time, when they share feeding duty for hungry nestlings.

CANADA JAY

Endearingly tame and undeniably cute, these jays, formerly known as gray jays, don't look or act like other jays! Fluffy gray and white, with a small bill suited to twisting off meat, Canada jays live in boreal, coniferous forests of the far North and high in the western mountains. So tame that they will eat right from a human hand, these jays are famed for approaching hikers, hunters and campers. Meat is what they want,

or bread, suet and other soft foods, which they cache in bark or branches, not in the soil. Nuts and seeds at feeders are less appealing to them. These calm jays tend to be more silent than their kin. It's other nesting birds that sound the alarm when one comes near, because nestlings are just more meat to a Canada jay.

PINYON JAY

This western species is in dramatic decline—down by an estimated 85% since 1970. Much of its tree and shrubby habitat has been turned into grazing lands. These short-tailed jays roam in big flocks to find meaty pinyon pine nuts, uttering nasal caws to keep in touch. Look for them from Montana to Oregon, south to New Mexico and Arizona. P.S. No need to break the bank buying pine nuts: They'll eat the usual jay menu of sunflower seeds, peanuts, corn and suet. ●

Sally Roth was watching blue jays harass a 6-foot-long black rat snake in a tree in Indiana when one extra daring jay gave it a sharp peck, causing the snake to instantly let loose and drop—right onto her shoulder.



GARDEN

Invite bees of all shapes and sizes into your yard with



DAHLIA
Jay Galvin
AUBURN,
WASHINGTON

DAHLIA

Dahlia spp., Zones 8 to 11

With a little extra work, dahlias thrive almost everywhere. Most cultivars do best with loads of sun and monthly low-nitrogen fertilizer treatments. In colder climates, dig up the tubers each fall and replant in early spring.

LIATRIS

Liatris spicata, Zones 3 to 8

Topping out at 4 feet tall, towering liatris offers a pollen buffet for butterflies and bees. Flower spikes range from purple to white and feature dozens of blooms.



LIATRIS
Angela Wilkins
FRANKFORT,
KENTUCKY



BUZZ

these pollen-packed all-stars. **BY RACHEL MAIDL**



I took a snapshot of this bee enjoying the pollen from a rose of Sharon with my Nikon D3300 and a steady hand. I'm lucky to have tons of pollinators in my garden. RENEE COLE

ROSE OF SHARON

Hibiscus syriacus, Zones 5 to 9

In the right conditions, this upright shrub reaches 12 feet tall, creating an excellent privacy screen or focal point. The large, tropical-looking flowers add flair to yards from July to September.



ROSE OF SHARON
Renee Cole
CORUNNA, MICHIGAN

POPPY
Stacy Camba
MOSCOW, IDAHO





LAVENDER
Kirk Meyers
ALTOONA,
PENNSYLVANIA

POPPY

Papaver rhoeas, Annual

Sometimes known as corn or field poppy, this flower grows in many areas of the U.S., although its prolific self-seeding makes it invasive in some regions. The blooms thrive in well-draining soil.

LAVENDER

Lavandula spp., Zones 5 to 10

Watch bees, painted ladies and hummingbirds frequent this fragrant plant from June to August. It grows best in gardens with loose, sandy soil, making it a perfect fit for most rock gardens. Harvest the stalks for an aromatic centerpiece or dry them for potpourris.



ASTER
Barbara
Cornett
STANFORD,
KENTUCKY

ASTER

Aster or *Symphyotrichum* spp., Zones 3 to 10

These garden all-stars begin blooming in late summer, providing lasting color through fall. No matter which hue you choose, bees and butterflies are sure to flock to their daisylike flowers.

INDIAN BLANKET

Gaillardia pulchella, Annual

These tough growers thrive just about anywhere. Red, yellow or bicolor flowers burst to life in late spring and last until fall. Seeds may be difficult to find in garden centers but are readily available online.



Texas is known for its abundance of wildflowers, and last year's bloom was no exception. I love the way the afternoon sun was highlighting this Indian blanket as a honeybee gathered pollen for its hive. MARY HULETT



INDIAN BLANKET
Mary Hulett
NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS



I was rushing about when I noticed a busy little bumblebee around this purple salvia. I had to see if I could capture the moment! DANIELLE GALLANT

SALVIA

Salvia spp., Zones 3 to 11

Gardeners can choose from a long list of salvia varieties—and the benefits that come with them. Purple, pink, red, white or yellow tube-shaped flowers are attractive to most hummingbirds and pollinators.



SALVIA
Danielle Gallant
DIGHTON,
MASSACHUSETTS



Vitex blooms are so delicate and beautiful. They provide a haven for bees foraging for pollen. I just love how blooms and wildlife benefit from each other. TERRI FOLEY

VITEX

Vitex negundo, Zones 6 to 9

Often called a chaste tree, this blooming shrub grows to more than 10 feet tall in warm winter climates and 3 to 5 feet tall in cooler regions. Its gray-green leaves complement small, fragrant flowers that pollinators love.



BLOODROOT
Theresa Reichart
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA



VITEX
Terri Foley
WILMINGTON,
NORTH CAROLINA



VERONICA
Steffani Pitzen
 CHISAGO CITY,
 MINNESOTA

BLOODROOT

Sanguinaria canadensis, Zones 3 to 8
 Bloodroot pops up in rich woods and along streams in early spring. Plant this flower to naturalize shaded wooded areas. The rootstock is poisonous, so be cautious growing it around children or pets.

VERONICA

Veronica spp., Zones 3 to 8
 Also called speedwell, veronica bursts with blooms May through July. Their flower spikes grow about a foot tall in a range of colors and growth habits, and—with the proper trimming—may come back for a second bloom in late summer. ●



LUBILUB/ISTOCK



Classic BEAUTIES

New colors, small statures and long-lasting blooms—here's what's fresh on the hydrangea scene and six of the best species for your backyard. **BY LUKE MILLER**

1 Southern favorites, bigleaf hydrangeas are now available in reblooming varieties, giving gardeners in the North a chance to enjoy them.



2

The Tuff Stuff mountain hydrangea is a reblooming type. It flowers in spring on old wood and again on new wood.

HYDRANGEAS ARE HOT—and understandably so. It's not every day that gardeners find a shrub as colorful and easygoing as your average annual. Most hydrangeas bloom for months at a time and look lovely even as the flowers fade. They also make stunning cut flowers, fresh or dried.

“People love hydrangeas because they’re easy to grow and deliver loads of flowers all summer,” says Natalie Carmolli, marketing and public relations specialist for Spring Meadow Nursery, growers of Proven Winners ColorChoice Shrubs. “They are also useful in a variety of settings as foundation plants or hedging, or planted on their own as a spectacular specimen plant.”

In the U.S., six species of hydrangeas are popular, most of which have large to very large flower clusters, making them easy to appreciate from a distance. Those clusters come in a variety of shapes, including round mopheads, frilly lacecaps and showy cone shapes. Depending on the species and cultivar, flowers may be white, pink, red, blue or lime green, and the colors often change come autumn.

Tuff Stuff
mountain
hydrangea





3 Little Quick Fire panicle hydrangea blooms a month earlier than others.

Among the six species, “smooth hydrangeas are incredibly easy to grow,” Natalie says. “They are super cold hardy down to USDA Zone 3.” One of her favorites is the line of Incrediball hydrangeas. “If you are familiar with the classic white Annabelle hydrangea, you’ll love Incrediball hydrangea,” she says. “It has massive white blooms held up on sturdy stems, so they don’t flop over as Annabelle tends to do.”

Bigleaf hydrangeas are the plants most people gravitate to, especially

COMMON HYDRANGEAS

Six species to look for at the garden center:

1. Bigleaf (*Hydrangea macrophylla*)
2. Mountain (*H. serrata*)
3. Panicle (*H. paniculata*)
4. Climbing (*H. petiolaris*)
5. Oakleaf (*H. quercifolia*)
6. Smooth (*H. arborescens*)



4 Use climbing hydrangeas to cover buildings, fences or arbors.



SAVE YOUR BOUNTY

Follow these steps to dry and preserve flowers.

- Wait until blooms start to fade and petals become less supple and more paperlike.
- Cut 12- to 18-inch stems and remove any leaves or foliage.
- Place in a vase of water, making sure flower heads aren't crowded.
- Keep the vase indoors, away from direct sunlight, for several weeks until stems are stiff.
- Use in bouquets, wreaths or other flower arrangements.

cultivars with pink flowers (seen in soils with high pH) or blue flowers (soils with low pH). However, bigleaf hydrangeas wilt quickly if the soil dries out in summer, and they may not flower reliably in colder regions. Panicle hydrangeas are a better alternative for many gardeners.

"If you have lots of sun and need a drought-tolerant plant, you'll find that panicle hydrangeas fare better than other types of hydrangeas," Natalie says. "They are also reliable bloomers that flower on new wood, making them a low-maintenance option for Zone 3 gardens." Natalie recommends Fire Light, which is packed with florets that transform from pure white to pink and then finish a pomegranate red.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE

It's best to plant hydrangeas in moist, well-draining soil (they do not like wet feet). With shallow roots, they tend to dry out quickly, so a 2- to 3-inch layer of shredded bark mulch is helpful. All hydrangeas need some sunlight for best flowering, ideally in the morning, but oakleaf hydrangeas tolerate more shade than others.

Hydrangeas grow in a wide range of climates, but some are a little better suited to extreme temperatures than others. Panicle hydrangeas such as Limelight and the smaller Little Lime are the most adaptable to any climate, thriving where others might struggle. The showy bigleaf hydrangeas and oakleaf hydrangeas typically don't do as well with temperature extremes, preferring the midrange zones. Smooth hydrangeas are cold hardy down to Zone 3 but do not like extreme heat.

WHAT'S NEW

COLOR: Smooth hydrangeas are now available in variety of colors. Incrediball Blush is silvery pink; the Invincibelle series boasts pink, ruby and pink-mauve hues; and Lime Rickey shines with deep green flowers. These new, trendy cultivars have been bred with stronger stems to prevent flopping.

SIZE: Hydrangeas are usually big and brassy, but plant breeders are working on compact varieties. If you're in the market for a smaller plant, look for Bobo panicle hydrangea, Tiny Tuff Stuff mountain hydrangea, Mini Penny bigleaf hydrangea and Invincibelle Wee



5 Gatsby Pink oakleaf hydrangea is a native grown for fall color.

White smooth hydrangea. “Wee White is a huge game changer because of its diminutive size,” Natalie says. “Topping out at just 2½ feet, this is an ideal hydrangea for use in containers and in areas where the typical larger-sized hydrangea just isn’t an option.”

REBLOOMING: While hydrangeas are known for long-lasting blooms, work is being done to encourage reblooming among bigleaf and mountain varieties. The Tuff Stuff series starts blooming in early summer, producing new buds and blooms until frost. “Our newest variety is Tuff Stuff Ah-Ha mountain hydrangea,” Natalie says. “It’s a strong rebloomer, with huge waterlilylike double florets that are blue or pink depending on the soil.” •

Luke Miller is a master gardener who annually scouts his yard looking for just one more place to plant a hydrangea.



6 Invincibelle Wee White smooth hydrangea blooms for months.

Leading Acid Reflux Pill Becomes an Anti-Aging Phenomenon

Clinical studies show breakthrough acid reflux treatment also helps maintain vital health and helps protect users from the serious conditions that accompany aging such as fatigue and poor cardiovascular health

**by David Waxman
Seattle Washington:**

A clinical study on a leading acid reflux pill shows that its key ingredient relieves digestive symptoms while suppressing the inflammation that contributes to premature aging in men and women.

And, if consumer sales are any indication of a product's effectiveness, this 'acid reflux pill turned anti-aging phenomenon' is nothing short of a miracle.

Sold under the brand name AloeCure, it was already backed by clinical data documenting its ability to provide all day and night relief from heartburn, acid reflux, constipation, irritable bowel, gas, bloating, and more.

But soon doctors started reporting some incredible results...

"With AloeCure, my patients started reporting less joint pain, more energy, better sleep, stronger immune systems... even less stress and better skin, hair, and nails" explains Dr. Liza Leal; a leading integrative health specialist and company spokesperson.

AloeCure contains an active ingredient that helps improve digestion by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Scientists now believe that this acid imbalance is what contributes to painful inflammation throughout the rest of the body.

The daily allowance of AloeCure has shown to calm this inflammation which is why AloeCure is so effective.

Relieving other stressful symptoms related to GI health like pain, bloating, fatigue, cramping, constipation, diarrhea, heartburn, and nausea.

Now, backed with new clinical studies, AloeCure is being recommended by doctors everywhere to help improve digestion, calm painful inflammation, soothe joint pain, and even reduce the appearance of wrinkles – helping patients to look and feel decades younger.

FIX YOUR GUT & FIGHT INFLAMMATION

Since hitting the market, sales for AloeCure have taken off and there are some very good reasons why.

To start, the clinical studies have been impressive. Participants taking the active ingredient in AloeCure saw a stunning 100% improvement in digestive symptoms, which includes fast and lasting relief from reflux.

Users also experienced higher energy levels and endurance, relief from chronic discomfort and better sleep. Some even reported healthier looking skin, hair, and nails.

A healthy gut is the key to a reducing swelling and inflammation that can wreak havoc on the human body. Doctors say this is why AloeCure works on so many aspects of your health.

AloeCure's active ingredient is made from the healing compound found in Aloe vera. It is both safe and healthy. There are also no known side effects.

Scientists believe that it helps improve digestive and immune health by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Research has shown that this acid imbalance contributes to painful inflammation throughout your entire body and is why AloeCure seems to be so effective.

EXCITING RESULTS FROM PATIENTS

To date over 5 million bottles of AloeCure have been sold, and the community seeking non-pharma therapy for their GI health continues to grow.

According to Dr. Leal, her patients are absolutely thrilled with their results and are often shocked by how fast it works.

"For the first time in years, they are free from concerns about their digestion and almost every other aspect of their health," says Dr. Leal, "and I recommend it to everyone who wants to improve GI health without resorting to drugs, surgery, or OTC medications."

"I was always in 'indigestion hell.' Doctors put me on all sorts of antacid remedies. Nothing worked. Dr. Leal recommended I try AloeCure. And something remarkable happened... Not only were all the issues I had with my stomach gone - completely gone – but I felt less joint pain and I was able to actually sleep through the night."

With so much positive feedback, it's easy to see why the community of believers is growing and sales for the new pill are soaring.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND ALOECURE

AloeCure is a pill that's taken just once daily. The pill is small. Easy to swallow. There are no harmful side effects and it does not require a prescription.

The active ingredient is a rare Aloe Vera component known as acemannan.

Made from 100% organic Aloe Vera, AloeCure uses a proprietary process that results in the highest quality, most bio-available levels of acemannan known to exist.

According to Dr. Leal and several of her colleagues, improving the pH balance of your stomach and restoring gut health is the key to revitalizing your entire body.



When your digestive system isn't healthy, it causes unwanted stress on your immune system, which results in inflammation in the rest of the body.

The recommended daily allowance of acemannan in AloeCure has been proven to support digestive health, and calm painful inflammation without side effects or drugs.

This would explain why so many users are experiencing impressive results so quickly.

REVITALIZE YOUR ENTIRE BODY

With daily use, AloeCure helps users look and feel decades younger and defend against some of the painful inflammation that accompanies aging and can make life hard.

By buffering stomach acid and restoring gut health, AloeCure calms painful inflammation and will help improve digestion... soothe aching joints... reduce the appearance of wrinkles and help restore hair and nails ... manage cholesterol and oxidative stress... and improve sleep and brain function... without side effects or expense.

Readers can now reclaim their energy, vitality, and youth regardless of age or current level of health.

One AloeCure Capsule Daily

- Helps End Digestion Nightmares
- Helps Calm Painful Inflammation
- Soothes Stiff & Aching Joints
- Reduces appearance of Wrinkles & Increases Elasticity
- Manages Cholesterol & Oxidative Stress
- Supports Healthy Immune System
- Improves Sleep & Brain Function

HOW TO GET ALOECURE

Due to the enormous interest consumers have shown in AloeCure, the company has decided to extend their nationwide savings event for a little while longer. Here's how it works...

Call the AloeCure number and speak to a live person in the US. Callers will be greeted by a knowledgeable and friendly person approved to offer up to 3 FREE bottles of AloeCure with your order. AloeCure's Toll-Free number is **1-800-746-2801**. Only a limited discounted supply of AloeCure is currently available.

Consumers who miss out on the current product inventory will have to wait until more becomes available and that could take weeks. They will also not be guaranteed any additional savings. The company advises not to wait. Call **1-800-746-2801** today.



Dahlia

Ask the Experts

What to plant in fall, how to evict wasps and other backyard tips.

Q Is it too late in the year to plant liatris corms and dahlia tuberous roots?

Barbara Giese
MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN

Melinda: It's best to plant liatris corms in spring or early summer. You could either store them for winter or try planting them this fall with other spring-flowering bulbs. If you decide to plant them now, wait for the soil to cool so the corms do not sprout this year. Your dahlias have to wait—it's too late to plant them outside. The plants won't have time to sprout, grow and replenish energy before the first frost in your area. You could try growing the dahlias inside but most homes do not have sufficient light. I suggest storing the dahlia tuberous roots and liatris corms in a cool, dark location for winter. Pack them in peat moss to prevent the bulbs from drying out. If they're still firm and plump after the cold season has passed, plant them in spring.



Q Can you identify this bird?

Christine Ramey SPRINGFIELD, GEORGIA

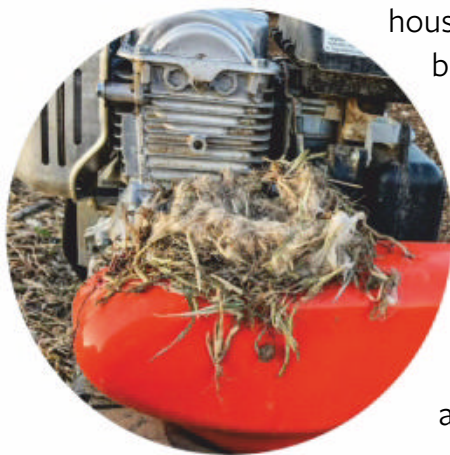
Kenn and Kimberly: This is a northern mockingbird, so named because other species in this group live farther south in the tropics. Even partially hidden by leaves, it's recognizable by the overall pale gray look, thin black bill and the distinct pattern of white on the tips and edges of certain wing feathers. Mockingbirds are fairly common year-round in Georgia but they often avoid coming to feeders. You're lucky to have this one as a visitor!

Q I discovered this newly made nest while prepping my fall garden. What bird nests this late in the year?

Anna Perea LOVELAND, COLORADO

Kenn and Kimberly: You're right, it's an uncommon time of year for nest-building, as well as an unusual location!

In your area of Colorado, the builder is most likely a house sparrow. While these enterprising little birds usually place their nests inside holes in trees or structures, they'll sometimes put them in more open places like this spot on your tractor. They also build nests throughout the year. We can't be sure from the photo, but it's possible this nest wasn't made by a bird. It could be the work of some small mammal, maybe a mouse or one of the native wood rats.



Q What is this flower? We've been guessing on how to care for it.

Larry Buck OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN

Melinda: It looks like you are providing excellent care for your desert rose. The swollen base and thick fleshy leaves help this succulent thrive in the semiarid climate of eastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. With proper care, your plant can eventually grow 5 feet tall and 3 feet wide. Grow desert rose in full sun and well-draining soil outdoors in the summer. Water thoroughly and as often as needed during the warm sunny months. Consider watering it a bit more to encourage a larger swollen base. Use one or two applications of a balanced fertilizer in spring and early summer, and move the plant indoors when temperatures start dropping below 55 degrees. Place it in a cool, bright location indoors for winter, and decrease watering frequency.



FALL CHICKS *Attract late-season nesters by planting fall-blooming flowers, native trees and shrubs. It's very important for fledglings to have shelter as they learn to fly. Be sure to keep your birdbath out, too—young birds love to splash around in fresh water!*

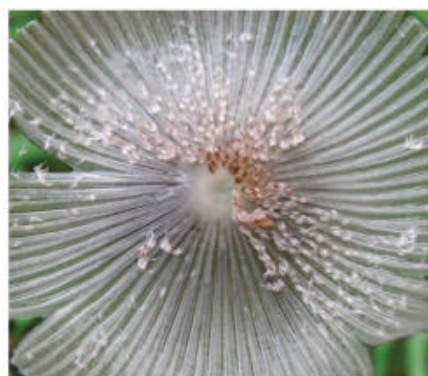


Q How do I keep yellow jackets out of my birdhouses?

Gai Murray WESTMINSTER, COLORADO

Kenn and Kimberly: Yellow jackets and other wasps chew up bits of wood to create paper, using it to fashion elaborate hanging nests. They're attracted to birdhouses, which offer sheltered nesting spots. Don't use pesticides on the birdhouse to keep wasps out—that's harmful for the birds, too. Instead, rub a bar of soap on the inside of the birdhouse roof. The slick surface makes it impossible for the wasps to attach the base of their nests to the roof, so they give up and go elsewhere.

Q This pretty mushroom popped up in our yard. What species is it? **Sharon Ferris** MOORHEAD, MINNESOTA



Melinda: It's most likely a pleated ink cap mushroom, also known as Japanese parasol. You typically find these scattered in grassy areas in summer and fall, growing alone or in groups. There are quite a few similar-looking mushrooms, so a close look under the microscope is needed to confirm its true identity.

Q Is the spicy stuff they put in birdseed to ward off squirrels safe for our feathered friends?

Betty Jo Halls

CLEARWATER, MINNESOTA

Kenn and Kimberly: It's good to question these things, but there's strong evidence the hot element in some birdseeds, capsaicin, is harmless to birds. In the American tropics, many birds even eat the red fruits of native wild peppers without being affected by the capsaicin they contain. In general, birds have far fewer taste buds than mammals, and the burning sensation doesn't bother them. Avian digestive systems, including throats and stomachs, are very tough, which allows them to eat all kinds of things that would seem daunting to us.





Q This strange moth acts just like a hummingbird. What is it? **Diana Frye** OTTUMWA, IOWA

Kenn and Kimberly: Your mystery guest is a member of the sphinx moth family. More than 100 species of these big insects live in North America. Most of them feed by hovering in front of flowers, just like hummingbirds. Many sphinx moths are active only at night, zooming around gardens and meadows in the dark. The one in your photo, the white-lined sphinx, may fly by day or night. It's recognized by its striped and checkered body, white lines on the forewings, and broad pink stripe on the hindwings.



Q How did our dwarf Alberta spruce become so misshapen? **Peggy Ward** CECIL, OHIO

Melinda: It is not unusual to see this type of growth on a dwarf Alberta spruce. The dwarf conifer originated from a mutation discovered on a white spruce. Plants were propagated from the unique, compact growth. A branch will occasionally revert back to the larger, more robust white spruce. Simply remove the larger branch at the bark collar, near the base of the growth. Do this as soon as possible to prevent it from ruining the shape of your spruce.

MEET THE EXPERTS



Kimberly and Kenn Kaufman are the duo behind the Kaufman Field Guide series. They speak and lead bird trips all over the world.



Melinda Myers is a nationally known, award-winning garden expert, TV/radio host and author of more than 20 books.

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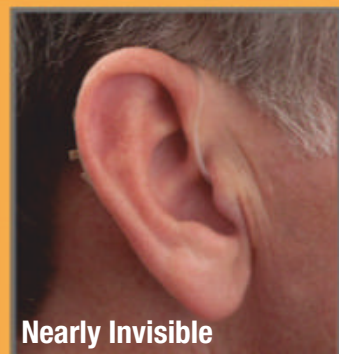
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Mississippi's Best Drive

Three wildlife-friendly stops along Natchez Trace Parkway.

BY CRYSTAL RENNICK

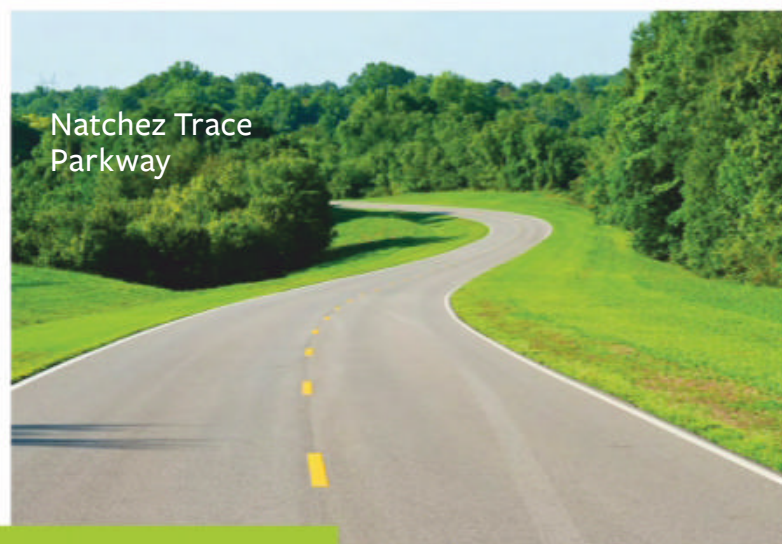
1 Jump on the **boardwalk trail** at milepost 122 and take a 30-minute walk among towering tupelo and bald cypress trees in the **Cypress Swamp**. The trees thrive in the watery bogs, hosting waterfowl and other wildlife such as frogs, snakes and alligators.

2 Bring binoculars to **LeFleur's Bluff State Park**, where you'll spot migrating birds, plus nesting thrushes, warblers and tanagers. Afterward, take a stroll through the **Mississippi Museum of Natural Science** to see interpretive exhibits about native birdlife.

3 With one of the largest species lists of any site in Mississippi, **St. Catherine Creek National Wildlife Refuge** is a popular hot spot for birders. Visit in late summer to see thousands of wood storks roost in the cypress trees at dusk.



Walk among tupelo and bald cypress trees at milepost 122.



THINGS TO DO

Let Natchez Trace take your stress away.

Take a leisurely drive, bike ride or hike along any portion of the 444-mile Natchez Trace Parkway and see why folks love this scenic, historic road. Meandering through Mississippi and parts of Alabama and Tennessee,

the parkway boasts activities like camping, bird-watching, fishing, horseback riding or simply soaking up nature's quiet beauty. Before you visit, check [nps.gov/natr](https://www.nps.gov/natr), for special events and info.

What's your favorite veggie to grow?

Readers prefer to grab this produce from the garden instead of the grocery store.

Cucumbers are quick and easy. I love to eat and grow them. I plant at least three different varieties every summer, including pickling cucumbers. They have the most flavor—sometimes I'll just pick one, wipe it off and start munching! **Alice Mellor** SCOTLAND, CONNECTICUT

I plant Swiss chard in my flower beds. I love the variety of colored leaves and stems.

Gail Randal HALIFAX, PENNSYLVANIA

There's nothing better than fresh sweet corn from the garden! **Tiffany Ertle** HOMOSASSA, FLORIDA



Tomatoes

My favorite veggies are sugar snap peas. I seed them early in spring, so they're one of the first plants to pop up in my garden. The pods taste just like summer! **Rhonda Giesbrecht** STEINBACH, MANITOBA



Cayenne peppers

I love growing cayenne chile peppers. They're less picky than other veggies, and do well in Kansas' changing weather. I freeze them to use in chili and other recipes.

Jennifer Broadstreet Hess
MARION, KANSAS

Every year I grow a tomato plant in a whiskey barrel or another large container. I also add herbs like basil, oregano, thyme and sometimes even green onions. I like to call the planting my spaghetti pot.

Darcy Larum
JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN

YOUR TURN!

Q. What birding destination is on your bucket list?

Share your answer with us!
birdsandblooms.com/submit

YOU DON'T SAY



Caption This!

A group of curious cormorants hang out on a favorite perch.

Mary Hindle of Ottawa, Ontario, spotted a leucistic double-crested cormorant sunning itself while two other cormorants sat on its perch. What is this trio thinking about?

SHARE YOUR CAPTION

Go to birdsandblooms.com/submit and choose “Caption This!” in the dropdown. Look for our favorite in the November issue!

LAST ISSUE'S WINNING CAPTION

“I don’t want to go back to the nest, it’s still light out!”

SUBMITTED BY
KELLY McCALLISTER
ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS



MOCKINGBIRDS: DEBBIE PARKER

SHARE YOUR BEST FUNNY NATURE PHOTOS! Follow the Submission Guidelines on page 69.

CAST THE PURR-FECT SPELL



Complete with a golden
crescent moon charm



Actual size of bag is
13" W x 9" H

Witching Hour HANDBAG

AN ENCHANTING ACCESSORY FEATURING LISA PARKER ARTISTRY!

Designed to bewitch you from the very first glance, this eye-catching handbag is expertly crafted of soft, pebbled faux leather in bold blocks of red, burgundy and cream with belt-style trim. Lisa Parker's renowned cat artistry is emblazoned on the side, where a black cat resting atop a book of magic gazes out at you with luminous yellow eyes. A candle flickers nearby, while a dangling golden metallic crescent moon charm is your sign that the witching hour is almost here!

In addition to the magical cat artistry, the "Witching Hour" Handbag also has thoughtful organizational touches to keep your belongings within easy reach wherever the day's adventures may take you. The main compartment features a zippered closure for extra security and peace of mind, along with an interior zip pocket and two handy slip pockets.

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Seeing Spots

Dramatic eyespots make common buckeyes easy to identify.

A common buckeye
fluttered around these purple salvia flowers
and landed for a moment. I love how the
hint of blue on the eyespots of the wings is
echoed in the color of the blooms.

Roslynn Long BURNSVILLE, MINNESOTA



DID YOU KNOW?

It's normal and OK to see butterflies with tattered wings. Common buckeyes get around just fine even with as much as two-thirds of their wings missing.

The wings

of a common buckeye remind me of a painter's palette. Buckeyes feed on wildflowers along old country roads near my home. I love to photograph the beauty around me, especially the things most people miss.

Willie Powell

MACEO, KENTUCKY



Common Buckeye

I was thrilled to see a beautiful buckeye butterfly enjoying the flowers in my garden. I don't see this species often, so it was a treat to photograph it.

Joni Walker

COLUMBIA CITY, INDIANA



WINGSPAN

2 to 2½ inches.

DISTINCTIVE MARKINGS

Brown with orange bars on forewings; large yellow-rimmed black eyespots with blue centers.

HABITAT

Open sunny spaces, including fields, gardens, roadsides; often sits on bare ground.

CATERPILLAR

Dark green to gray, with orange and yellow markings and black spines.

HOST PLANTS

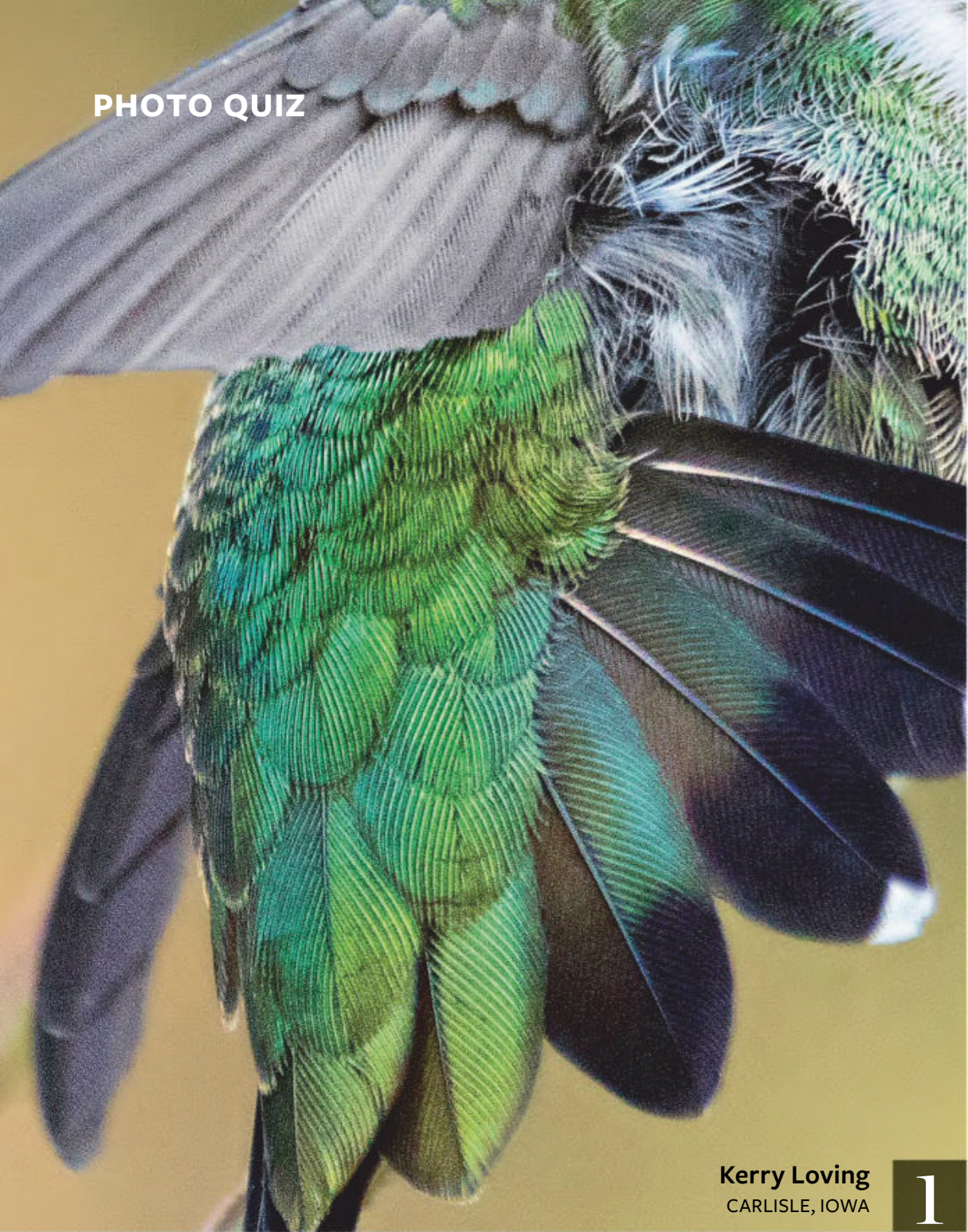
Snapdragon, plantain, figwort, vervain, ruellia and others.

RANGE

Most common in the South, but familiar across much of the U.S.



Buckeye
caterpillar



Kerry Loving
CARLISLE, IOWA

1



Joan Edblom
VIRGINIA, MINNESOTA

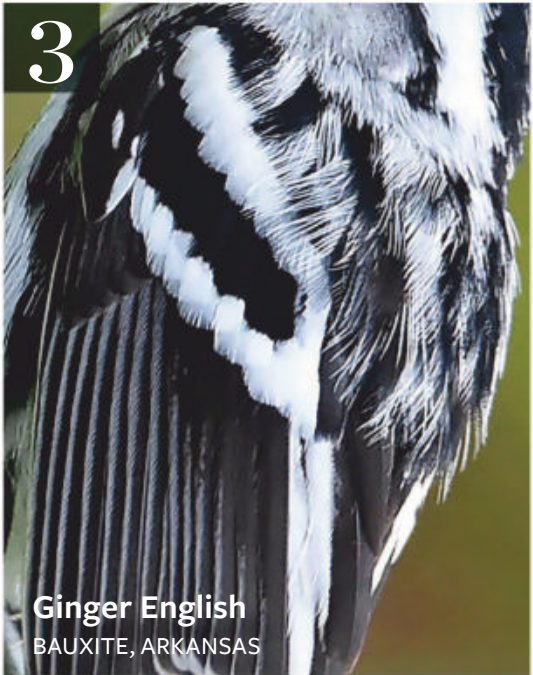
True or False?

- A. **SMALL SONGBIRDS** are covered in more than 5,000 feathers.
- B. **A BIRD'S WING** feathers are also called remiges.
- C. **ALL BIRDS SHED** their feathers and grow an entirely new set. This gradual, orderly process is known as molting.

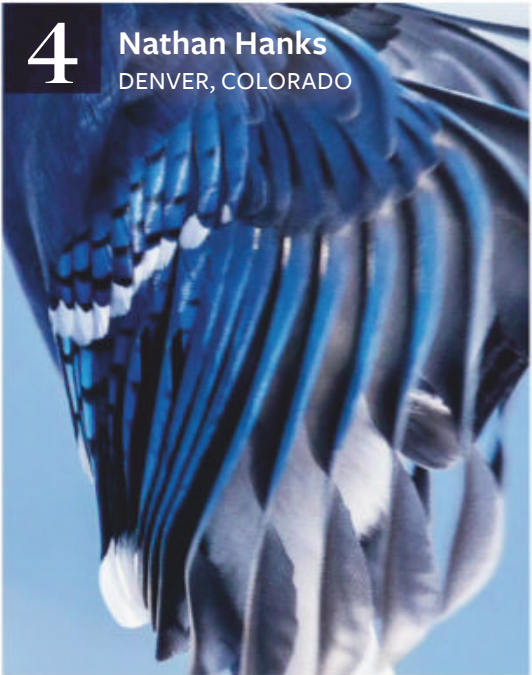
On the Wing

Can you ID these birds by their feather patterns?

answers
on the
bottom!



Ginger English
BAUXITE, ARKANSAS



Nathan Hanks
DENVER, COLORADO



Angela Rattinger
FRUITPORT, MICHIGAN

ANSWERS 1. RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD 2. AMERICAN GOLDFINCH 3. BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER 4. BLUE JAY 5. CEDAR WAXWING A. FALSE; THEY HAVE FEWER THAN 4,000. B. TRUE C. TRUE



FOR THE READER

Find the Hummingbird

In each issue, we hide a hummingbird like the one above left. Enter to win at birdsandblooms.com/contests if you find it. Winners receive a one-year subscription to *Birds & Blooms*. In the July issue, we hid it on page 39.

HIDDEN OBJECT GUIDELINES

No purchase necessary to enter to win. Purchase will not improve your chances of winning. Sweepstakes is open to legal residents age 18 years or older of the U.S., its territories and possessions, or of Canada (excluding the Province of Quebec). Sweepstakes begins on Aug. 7, 2019, and ends on Sept. 30, 2019. Visit birdsandblooms.com/contests for official rules. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED. Sweepstakes sponsored by RDA Enthusiast Brands, LLC.

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Please send submissions only through our online form.

What you'll get: If we print your submission in the magazine, we will send you a complimentary copy of the issue in which it appears, and any compensation as may be specified by us in writing.

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Contact: We may contact you via phone, email or mail regarding your submission, but our small staff can't acknowledge receipt of submissions.

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The Dirt on Carrots

Step into the world of these gardening (and snacking) classics.

BY EMILY HANNEMANN



The average person eats more than 10,000 of these sweet, crunchy vegetables in their lifetime. On a yearly basis, folks munch on 8.3 pounds of fresh carrots, and consume 1.4 pounds of the veggie from the freezer.

85 More than 85% of U.S. carrots are grown in California—the city of Holtville, California, calls itself the carrot capital of the world. Michigan and Texas are also among the top carrot-growing states.



1600

Despite their prominence in modern grocery stores, orange carrots emerged in the 1600s. Purple and yellow were once the most prevalent colors, and today, heirloom varieties have made a big comeback.

1940

Perhaps the best-known carrot-eating animated character, Bugs Bunny debuted in the 1940 cartoon A Wild Hare. What's up, Doc?

204

These orange vegetables are an incredible source of nutrients like beta carotene, vitamin C and potassium, but they're especially high in vitamin A. Even just half a cup of cooked or raw carrots contains about 204% of your recommended daily value.

2 Carrots, a biennial vegetable, have a life cycle that takes two years. If you leave a healthy carrot in the ground, its top will bloom and produce a round of seeds in its second year.

TOP: ANSONMIAO; BOTTOM: NATALIALEB/BOTH ISTOCK

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“Nowhere can man
find a quieter or more
untroubled retreat
than in his own soul.”

—*Marcus Aurelius*

Indigo bunting
on sunflower by
Sherri Hendricks

HARRISBURG,
PENNSYLVANIA